C:\Documents and Settings\shirley.barclay\Local Settings\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\VI72X5TV\MCj03117780000[1].wmfVocabulary on the Move

Vocabulary instruction, like most good teaching, needs student engagement – and that means a lot more than just looking up the words in the dictionary. Here’s one way to get the vocabulary words into your students’ long term memories.

# How it works:

1. Make a list of vocabulary terms your students have been learning. These should be terms students are familiar with; they can include words from previous units. Write the terms on sentence strips. Then staple the ends of each strip together to make a headband.
2. Ask each student to put on a headband without looking at the word on that headband.
3. Create a list of questions on the board. Tell students that each student’s goal is to guess the work on his/her headband. Explain that students can figure out their words by walking around the room and asking other students questions from the list on the board. They should be instructed to leave their headbands on, even if they think they know their words.
4. After a few minutes of playing the game, ask those students who think they know their words to tell the class what they’ve figured out and why they think they’re right.
5. Once they’ve done that, ask all students to remove their headbands. Celebrate with all students the experience of trying to figure out their words. Let those who came u with their words – as well as those who didn’t – talk about some of the questions they asked about their words, answers they were given, etc.

# Variation:

With older students you could have the vocabulary words on pieces of paper attached to the students’ back. They would use the same procedure of moving about the room, asking questions to assist them in determining what their word is.

# Sample Questions:

1. What is a synonym for me?
2. What is an antonym for me?
3. What is the definition for me?
4. Give me an example of me.
5. Give me an example of something I’m not.
6. What part of speech am I?

\*Depending on the level/grade of your students, you would vary the questions.

This kind of active involvement is a key component of differentiated instruction. By getting your students actively engaged in learning, you’ve greatly increased the likelihood that they’ll retain what they’ve learned.